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Route 8
Frederick, Md. 21701

April 27, 1968

Mr. Steve Jaffe
18062 Bluesail Drive
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CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Steve:

As I promised you, I have read the memoranda you sent and herewith reply.

Your March 20 interview with Miss Helbling may be quite important. There are several things I would like to say and ask. First, with her and with anyone else interviewed under the same circumstances, you should be alert to both feedback and confabulation. What you do not say in your memo that could influence the thinking of people in New Orleans reading it is that Miss Helbling had been listening to me tell the story of New Orleans possibly for as much as a week on very intensive radio and tv exposure in Los Angeles. While I am not saying it is so, when she mentions a name like Arcacha without apparent good reason, it could have been feedback. Her purpose in phoning me was a laudable one and quite frankly I find the information she gave you potentially extremely exciting; but in questioning such people, I suggest you try, at least in your own mind, to separate that of which they have personal knowledge (and in her case it may be 100%) from that which is of different origin. For your information, her reference to an industrialist from New Orleans named Davis could very well be a person well known to Jim, indications of whose possible involvement I picked up six months ago and who people in New Orleans not on the staff but keeping an eye on this now tell me no longer has a telephone, that Davis helped Walker with his Oxford march, is a Nazi with both capital and lower case "N's" and is quite wealthy as an industrialist. I will send Louis a copy of this letter calling to his attention the possible connection.

But the real purpose of this letter is to ask you for those things that were to have been forthcoming from her in February that, two months later, I do not have. It is urgent that you get this immediately and forward it to me for hand-delivery to the office. I will be there in two weeks and I must digest it in advance. Once I get there, I will be going at a pace that will preclude digesting the information. Pictures in particular are extremely important, even newspaper pictures. I have private medical sources I can tap in the New Orleans area in addition to those available to the office.

Your memo says you showed her a wide variety of pictures. One thing I would want to know is whether you showed her good likenesses of the people in the story of the False Oswald, particularly Hall and Howard. Her reference to drugs exactly coincides with Hall's admission that he collected drugs from doctors, including Cuban doctors, in the Los Angeles area. Please take my use of the word "urgent" literally and do this immediately, sending me what you have by registered mail. There is no special delivery in the country.

May I also suggest that when it takes a whole month to write a memo as important as this one you largely frustrate the purpose of writing memos. If necessary, let something else go. Had I known the contents of this memo two months ago, when it was possible - and had been clamoring for it, as you know - I might have been able to put it to good use and left other people outside the office working on it.

Your memo about Fred Newcomb is an accurate reflection of what Fred says. I know this is so because, as you know, I have been working with him and I really started him. However, what it does lack is critical analysis. .Fred is brilliant besides being a wonderful guy and, like each of his, when he makes up his mind something is right he is persuaded. Two things most obviously lacking in this memo, as in Fred's analysis, are an assessment as to whether or not what he alleges was within the realm of physical possibility - and here my belief is that it was not and only those with the extensive knowledge of this film and its history that I have can feel this assurance - and an appraisal of its thoroughness and accuracy. On the second point what you as a photographer should understand better than I is the total absence of any identification of the lenses involved. For your information, let me give you this description of the Zapruder lens: It is an f.18 Bell and Howell "Varamat Zoom", it is model 414P the exact focal length of which is not given in the literature accompanying it but I think it is fair to say that it ranges from approximately 10 to 30 mm. I think it is also obvious to you that this is in no way comparable to the other lenses used in taking the pictures you and Fred cite in comparison.

Jim sometimes has to make spot decisions and if he makes them based on impomplete information, the consequences can be both serious and adverse. In this particular case, in failing to tell him that I had been working with Fred on this, you denied him the opportunity for an immediate additional opinion. Here I want to suggest that, busy as the people in Jim's office are, it is unwise to depend upon them to forward copies and that you do what I try to do and that is forward the appropriate copies yourself. In addition, this is the only real way all of us can work together. You will find that I regularly forward what I think is of interest to your people in Los Angeles to Steve and do likewise with the people in San Francisco.

With respect to your memo on Hall, I hope you will take this as I intend it, as a constructive suggestion to permit a younger man the profit of the experience of an older one. Your memo of your March 12 interview with him is (a) repetitious and (b) incomplete. It has the additional defect of not telling Him of other information of which you knew was or would be available to him. Remember, he is really very busy and quite tired and, to the degree possible, these things should be done for him.

The first part of the memo repeats only a tiny fraction of what I had gotten from him. There is nothing new in it, including his willingness to go to New Orleans, because I had arranged that a month earlier. The problem here I think is that your tremendous desire to do things is slicing you too thin. As a means of operation, if I may suggest it, you should have done one of two things: You should have turned this over to Al Schwartz entirely or had him with you. Because Al had more time than any of the others of you, when I turned Hall on, I left Al behind as contact with him. If you didn't know this, Steve Burton did. By way of preparation, I had Al with me on each of my three extremely lengthy interviews with Hall and he knew everything I had learned. Hall possesses other information that could have been

extracted from him at the same time and with no more effort. In addition, there are things of potential importance that as signals that were lost upon you simply because it was new to you. There is no warrant for a description of his wife's reaction to the letter Corky Huston had taken her. This, however, is an identification of the fulcrum used by the other side. A second one is his stepson, John Pappas. It likewise may be significant that Hall alleges he had not seen document 1553 earlier. The only reason he hadn't is because he didn't want to. I told him that anytime he wanted copies, they were available to him in Los Angeles, that he need only ask Al and I had already given them to Art Kevin. I gave him copies of my books and told him to ask for any documents he wanted. I had copies of 1553 with me each of the times I interviewed him and my reason for handling him this way was psychological. However, I suggest to you that there may be some reason for Hall to have failed to ask for these documents.

Finally, your memo on Jim Rose: Steve can give you much information on Robert K. Brown and again I suggest knowledge of it prior to interviewing Rose could have made your memo more valuable. Brown is or was a Special Forces captain assigned to the post at which Cubans were trained. He is today engaged in a business the unprofitability of which is absolutely guaranteed: Publishing on guerrilla warfare from Boulder, Colo. He is a man sufficiently trusted by Drennan for Drennan to have made him an offer to kill President Kennedy and he has made what he regards as the right connections in New Orleans - a veteran of the Bay of Pigs - preparatory to writing a book. I encourage you to learn immediately as much as you can about Brown and to extract from Rose everything he knows about him, and please keep me immediately posted.

The foregoing is in no way intended as personal criticism. My purpose is manifold. I want to help you to make better use of your time. I want to impress upon you the urgent need of collaboration and I want to try to teach you better operating methods. Above all, when we are each individuals, not part of a formal organization, it is of the utmost importance that we establish our own means of working together as much as humans can unselfishly, if for no other reason as a minimum requirement of success. While it is risky to use personal examples, let me tell you that, in November, I prepared Art Kevin and, through him, Steve to do what I ultimately had to do with Hall and Howard. I knew that it would have been more dramatic if I had then done it myself, but I gave Art all of a very considerable investment I had made of both time and money and the possibility of credit on the chance that we could then accomplish our purpose.

One other thing: there is a considerable amount of additional information on Duncan, whose name sometimes appears as Dunkin, and again I encourage you to get it from Steve who may have it.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg